

Henry Allen Nursery School
Food and Nutrition Policy

Introduction

At Henry Allen Nursery School we recognise the importance of healthy eating in supporting children's growth, development, and long-term well-being; maintaining a healthy weight, and good oral health. This policy outlines our approach to food provision, mealtimes, and the promotion of healthy eating across the nursery. It supports our commitment to achieving and maintaining our Healthy Schools accreditation.

Aims

- To promote a positive attitude towards healthy eating.
- To provide nutritious, balanced food and drink throughout the nursery day.
- To ensure that children's dietary needs (including allergies, intolerances, and cultural/religious preferences) are met.
- To encourage children to develop social skills and positive attitudes at mealtimes.

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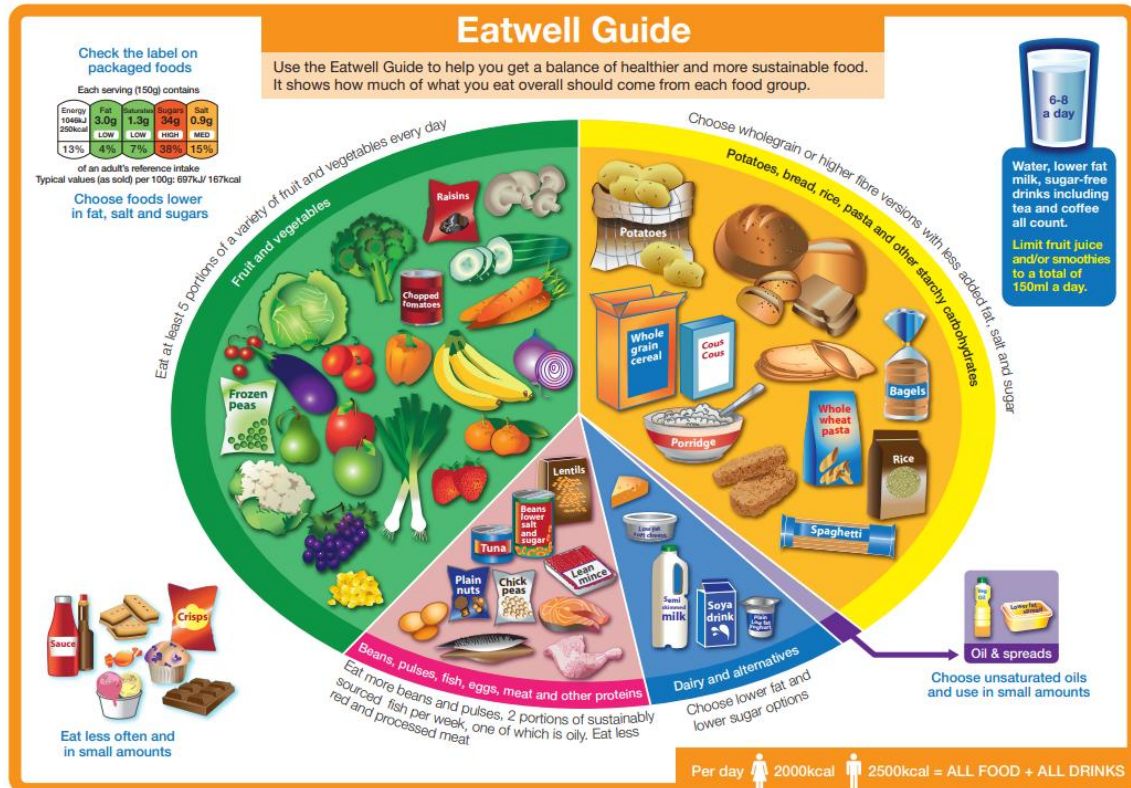
1. Promoting Healthy Eating

Our curriculum goal 5, seen below, explicitly references keeping our mind and body healthy. Healthy eating is reinforced through play, stories, and focused circle time activities, and also throughout our general provision. Food-related activities such as cooking, growing vegetables, and tasting new foods from different cultures are part of the curriculum. We teach children to choose healthier options, referencing the Eatwell Guide.

Curricular goal 5: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children will show an understanding of different ways we can keep our mind and body healthy. 	
Milestone 1 (2 years) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children will establish their sense of self in the setting, and express preferences and decisions. Children will be able to engage others through gestures, gaze and talk. 	Adults will encourage children to make choices throughout sessions, from a limited range of options, for example at snack. Adults will begin to talk about making healthy choices, for example through cooking activities.
Milestone 2 (2-3) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children will play with increasing confidence on their own. Children will be able to express a range of emotions, for example when happy or upset, and begin to talk about them. Children will begin to recognise differences and similarities between their peers. 	Adults will model a range of emotions, talking about them while children play. Adults will use language to explain different emotions. Adults will use stories and props to engage children and support their understanding of different feelings, abilities and cultures.
Milestone 3 (3-4) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children will be able to identify how other children are feeling. Children will be able to identify and moderate their own feelings socially and emotionally. Children will be able to identify food/drink that is healthy and unhealthy. Children will be able to talk about different forms of exercise. 	Adults will support children to understand why other children might be feeling upset or angry. They will support children to develop independence in resolving conflict, and use stories to promote discussion about emotions. Through cooking activities adults will support children to understand why some foods are healthier than others.
Final milestone: (4+) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children will be able to talk about different ways we can look after ourselves, for example our teeth, bodies and minds. Children will confidently be able to identify and express a range of emotions. Children will begin to understand the importance of keeping safe online. 	Adults will support children to understand the importance of looking after our teeth, bodies and mind, for example through healthy eating, exercise and sleep. Adults will support children to understand safe ways of using technology.

We work in partnership with parents/carers to support children’s healthy eating habits at home and at nursery. The Eatwell Guide uses government advice to show what a healthy and balanced diet looks like. It shows what a balance of foods should look like in one day or over a whole week. The advice in the Eatwell Guide applies to children from the age of 2 years.

A healthy, balanced diet is based on the 4 main food groups (fruit and vegetables; potatoes, bread, rice, pasta and other starchy carbohydrates; dairy or dairy alternatives; and beans, pulses, fish, eggs, meat and other proteins). These provide essential nutrients to help children grow and develop.



2. Snack Provision

- Fresh fruit and/or vegetables are offered at every snack time. The children are also offered a plain cracker, bread stick or rice cake.
- Children are offered milk or water to drink.
- Children bring in their own water bottles which they are allowed to drink from whenever they wish.
- Snack times are calm, social occasions where staff engage with children to model good eating habits.
- Children always eat with their friends at a table, encouraging them to try foods that they might not try at home.

3. Packed Lunches

- Parents/carers are encouraged to provide a balanced, nutritious packed lunch.
- We do not allow high sugar, high salt, and highly processed items such as sweets, chocolate bars, and fizzy drinks.
- Parents will be told if their child has not eaten, and a plan will be made to ensure they are eating healthily.
- Mealtimes are used to promote independence, social interaction, and learning about food.
- Staff model positive attitudes to food and healthy choices.

- Ideas and guidance for healthy packed lunches are provided to families.
- Food safety and hygiene: All lunchboxes are stored safely and hygienically in a lunch box trolley.
- We are unable to reheat food brought in from home.

Parents and/or carers should:

- Ensure the food is suitable for their child's individual developmental needs, and prepared in a way to prevent choking.

<https://www.foundationyears.org.uk/2021/09/food-safety-advice-on-choking-hazards-in-settings/>

- For perishable items that should be kept cool, pack food in insulated sealed bags. If ice packs are unavailable, the '4-hour rule' can be applied. This rule allows food to be stored outside of chilled conditions for up to 4 hours, but this should only be done once during the entire storage.
- Clearly label their child's name on the lunch bag.
- Pack foods that can safely be kept at room temperature as there is no refrigeration available for children's lunch boxes. The Food Standards Agency provides 27 advice on Listeria which has examples of ready-to-eat foods that should be eaten within 4 hours of removing them from the fridge:

<https://www.food.gov.uk/listeria>

Lunch box ideas and websites:

<https://www.nhs.uk/healthier-families/recipes/healthier-lunchboxes/>

Lunchbox tips



Keep them fuller for longer

Base the main lunchbox item on foods like bread, rice, pasta and potatoes. Choose wholegrain where you can.



Freeze for variety

Keep a small selection of different types of bread in the freezer so you have a variety of options – like bagels, pittas and wraps, granary, wholemeal and multigrain.



DIY lunches

Wraps and pots of fillings can be more exciting for kids when they get to make them. Dipping foods are also fun and a nice change from a sandwich each day.



Cut back on fat

Pick lower-fat fillings – like lean meats (including chicken or turkey), fish (such as tuna or salmon), lower-fat spread, reduced-fat cream cheese and reduced-fat hard cheese. And try to avoid using mayonnaise in sandwiches.

[See more healthier swap ideas](#)



Mix your slices

If your child does not like wholegrain, try making a sandwich from 1 slice of white bread and 1 slice of brown bread.



Always add veg

Cherry tomatoes, or sticks of carrot, cucumber, celery and peppers all count towards their 5 A Day. Adding a small pot of reduced-fat hummus or other dips may help with getting kids to eat vegetables.



Ever green

Always add salad to sandwiches and wraps too – it all counts towards your child's 5 A Day!



Cheesy does it...

Cheese can be high in fat and salt, so choose stronger-tasting ones – and use less of it – or try reduced-fat varieties.



Cut down on crisps

If your child really likes their crisps try reducing the number of times you include them in their lunchbox, and swap for homemade plain popcorn or plain rice cakes instead.



Add bite-sized fruit

Try chopped apple, peeled satsuma segments, strawberries, blueberries, halved grapes or melon slices to make it easier for them to eat. Add a squeeze of lemon juice to stop it from going brown.



Tinned fruit counts too

A small pot of tinned fruit in juice – not syrup – is perfect for a lunchbox and easily stored in the cupboard.



Swap the fruit bars

Dried fruit like raisins, sultanas and dried apricots are not only cheaper than processed fruit bars and snacks but can be healthier too. Just remember to keep dried fruit to mealtimes as it can be bad for teeth.



Switch the sweets

Swap cakes, chocolate, cereal bars and biscuits for malt loaf, fruited teacakes, fruit breads or fruit (fresh, dried or tinned – in juice not syrup).



Yoghurts: go low-fat and lower-sugar

Pop in low-fat and lower-sugar yoghurts or fromage frais and add your own fruit.



Get them involved

Get your kids involved in preparing and choosing what goes in their lunchbox. They are more likely to eat it if they helped make it.



Variety is the spice of lunch!

Be adventurous and get creative to mix up what goes in their lunchbox. Keeping them guessing with healthier ideas will keep them interested and more open to trying things.



Plan to Eatwell

The guide shows how much of what we eat overall should come from each food group to achieve a healthy, balanced diet. It can be really useful when thinking about what goes into kids' lunchboxes.

[The Eatwell Guide](#)

4. Management of Allergies and Special Dietary Requirements

- Information about children's dietary needs is collected on entry and updated regularly. A healthcare plan is developed with parents, shared with all staff and kept on the wall at each snack table. All medicines are kept in the cupboard next to the snack table, with easy access to epi-pens.
- A photographic chart of all the children with allergies and specific dietary requirements is on the wall at each snack table.
- Children with a specific allergy will have a labelled red cup or plate as a reminder to the staff and the child.
- Our staff supervise children appropriately at mealtimes to avoid food sharing and cross contact.
- Ongoing discussions about each child's cultural and dietary needs are crucial in creating a safe and inclusive environment for all children to eat. Each key person will have a central role in facilitating these conversations, helping to meet the dietary requirements of all children and supporting them in their development.
- We are a nut-free setting and take all reasonable precautions to prevent exposure to allergens. We regularly inform all parents and/or carers of the potential risk of foods brought from home for other children.
- Staff receive training on allergy awareness and emergency procedures. All our staff have paediatric first aid training.
- We take care taking care with celebrations (e.g. birthdays, festivals or holidays) where foods, such as fruits, are brought in from home.

Allergens:

Food allergies develop when the body's immune system reacts against food proteins which it sees as invaders. It then releases chemicals to attack. Symptoms of an allergic reaction may include:

- coughing, wheezing, breathlessness, noisy breathing or a hoarse voice
- a red raised rash (hives)
- tingly or itchy feeling in the mouth
- sneezing or an itchy, runny or blocked nose
- stomach pain
- feeling sick or vomiting
- swelling of face, lips, tongue or eyes
- difficulty swallowing
- diarrhoea
- feeling dizzy or lightheaded
- pale or floppy
- suddenly sleepy
- collapse or unconscious

These symptoms can happen on their own or they may be present in a serious reaction. A severe reaction called anaphylaxis or anaphylactic shock can occur. This

is a medical emergency that can be life threatening and needs urgent treatment. You should administer the child's autoinjector if they have one, and then call 999. You should use the child's second autoinjector (if they have one), if they haven't improved after 5 minutes. A child who is showing signs of anaphylaxis should never walk to a new location. Where necessary, they should be carried to a suitable safe location away from an allergen (for example, if a food item was spilt in their vicinity).

Any one or more of the following symptoms may be present:

- swelling of throat, tongue or upper airways
- difficulty swallowing
- wheezing / noisy breathing
- breathing difficulty
- persistent cough
- dizziness
- feeling faint
- sudden sleepiness
- confusion
- pale clammy skin
- loss of consciousness
-

It's possible to be allergic to anything, but there are 14 common allergens:

Common allergens in food

For example:

Allergen	Often found in
Tree nuts (for example almonds, hazelnuts, walnuts, pecan nuts, brazil nuts, pistachios, cashews, macadamias).	In sauces, desserts, crackers, bread, ice cream, marzipan, ground almonds, nut oils.
Peanuts	In sauces, cakes, desserts. Don't forget groundnut oil and peanut flour.
Eggs	In cakes, mousses, sauces, pasta, quiche, some meat products. Don't forget foods containing mayonnaise or brushed with egg.
Milk	In yoghurt, cream, cheese, butter, milk powders. Also check for foods glazed with milk.
Fish	In some salad dressings, pizzas, relishes, fish sauce.
Crustaceans	Such as prawns, lobster, scampi, crab, shrimp paste.
Molluscs	These include mussels, whelks, squid, land snails, oyster sauce.
Gluten (wheat such as spelt and khorasan wheat, barley, rye and oats)	Also check foods containing flour such as bread, pasta, cakes, pastry, meat products, sauces, soups, batter, stock cubes, soy and worcestershire sauces, breadcrumbs, foods dusted with flour.
Celery	This includes celery stalks, leaves and seeds and celeriac. Also look out for celery in salads, soups, celery salt, some meat products.
Lupin	Lupin seeds and flour in some types of bread and pastries.
Mustard	Including liquid mustard, mustard cress, mustard powder and mustard seeds in salad dressings, marinades, soups, sauces, curries, meat products.
Sesame seeds	In bread, bread sticks, tahini, hummus, sesame oil.
Soya	Such as tofu or beancurd, edamame, tempeh, soya flour and textured soya protein, in some ice cream, sauces, desserts, meat products, vegetarian products and vegan products.
Sulphur dioxide (when added and above 10mg/kg in the finished food and drink)	In meat products, fruit juice drinks, dried fruit and vegetables.

Food intolerances

Food intolerance is different to food allergy, and usually occurs when the body has difficulty digesting certain foods or ingredients in food. Intolerances do not involve the immune system and are not life threatening. Food intolerances cause unpleasant symptoms such as abdominal pain or discomfort, diarrhoea, bloating, constipation, red rash, itching or eczema flares.

Some common food intolerances include:

- lactose intolerance (lactose is the sugar found in animal milk, e.g. cow's milk, goat's milk and sheep's milk and can be found in foods or drinks containing animal milk, e.g. yoghurt)
- gluten intolerance or sensitivity (gluten is a protein found in wheat, barley and rye). It is important to note that gluten intolerance is different to coeliac disease
- intolerance to some food additives or chemicals.

If a food intolerance is suspected, we will work with parents and/or carers to keep a diary of foods eaten at the setting and at home and any symptoms experienced. This food diary can then be discussed with a health professional. This can be a useful way to highlight patterns between foods and symptoms. If an allergy is suspected, the food should be avoided while parents and/or carers seek input from an appropriate health professional. However, it is important not to exclude foods from a child's diet without a valid reason as this can result in an unnecessarily restricted diet, which could have a negative impact on nutrition.

Special Dietary Requirements

Children with special dietary requirements may need specific foods excluded or included. It is important not to exclude foods from a child's diet without a valid reason as this may lead to unnecessary restrictions in their diet. Where a food is excluded from a child's diet we will consider substitutions and replacement ingredients. We create a safe and inclusive environment for all children to eat, and children with special dietary requirements should be included in mealtimes with other children as far as possible. Only where a risk assessment concludes that a significant risk remains despite adequate training and supervision of meals and snacks times, would a child need to eat their meal separately to other children.

Special Dietary Requirements may include:

- **Vegetarianism:** A vegetarian won't eat meat of any kind, including fish. They also won't eat by-products of animal slaughter, such as gelatine. Most people who choose to be vegetarian do so for religious, health or moral reasons.
- **Veganism or eating a plant-based diet:** A vegan is someone who eats a diet based on plants (such as vegetables, grains, legumes, nuts, seeds and fruits) and foods made from plants. Vegans don't eat foods derived wholly or partially from animals (such as meat, fish, eggs and honey). Some people refer to this as eating a plant-based diet.

- Pescatarianism: A pescatarian avoids meat but eats fish and seafood. They may also consume dairy and eggs. People choose this diet for health, environmental, or ethical reasons, believing fish is a more sustainable or ethical option than other meats.
- Religious preferences: Some religions or faiths have strict dietary requirements. Although eating certain foods won't physically harm children, it is vital to respect their religious and cultural beliefs. Religious dietary requirements include (but are not limited to):
 - only eating halal foods
 - avoiding pork or beef
 - keeping kosher
 - eating specific foods only on certain days.

Coeliac disease

Coeliac disease is a common and serious autoimmune condition that can develop at any age. Children with coeliac disease have to strictly avoid foods containing gluten, e.g. ordinary wheat flour, bread, breakfast cereals, crackers, biscuits, pastry and pasta. Many packaged and processed foods contain gluten, e.g. some processed meats and fish, sausages and soups, and these need to be avoided. Traces of gluten may also be found in foods where gluten is not an ingredient but where there has been cross contact of gluten containing foods. An example of this is oats. Oats do not contain gluten but can be contaminated by other cereals during production.

Additional support needs

Some children may have specific dietary needs because of physical or developmental issues, which may affect their ability to eat independently, for example difficulty with swallowing. These children may need to have their food prepared in a particular way to make it easier to eat. We might need to provide one to one support at each meal and snack time if a child is unable to feed themselves.

It is also important to consider children who may experience sensory needs in relation to foods, for example, sensitivity to textures, tastes or smells, which can lead to limited preferences or aversions towards specific foods. As well as modifying the foods offered, some adaptations to the eating environment will be made, wherever possible, as a way to support the child at mealtimes, e.g. limiting noise and other distractions, having a cloth to wipe hands if required and not pressuring the child to eat.

If a child requires a special diet for a medical reason not discussed above, it is important to have written confirmation from their qualified health professional about the nature of their specific needs so that their nutritional requirements can be achieved. This information should be recorded, updated regularly and communicated to all staff involved in the preparing and handling of food. For children on a special diet, the parents and/or carers, or registered dietitian should supply the early years setting and

food service provider with details of the child's dietary needs. This will include suitable food choices for meals and snacks, foods that should be excluded or specifically included, or supplements that may be required.

5. Celebrations and Special Occasions

As we are aiming for all our children to be healthy, our recommendations for special events is to ensure any food brought in from home is balanced and meets the setting's food guidelines (for example recommending fruit platters to share or non-edible options to celebrate with such as bubbles or stickers). Any food shared in the setting should be checked for potential allergens.

6. Sustainability

To encourage sustainability:

- We provide a snack that is healthy, minimally packaged, and sourced with environmental impact in mind.
- Only milk or water is offered, to reduce the use of single-use packaging. We ask that children have their own named water bottle in school.
- We encourage families to pack lunches in reusable containers and minimise the use of disposable packaging such as cling film, foil, or single-use plastics.
- Food waste is kept to a minimum, and leftovers from snacks are composted where possible.
- Children are supported to understand basic principles of sustainability, such as recycling and reusing.
- We compost food waste from lunch and snack time to reduce landfill and support natural cycles.

We ask that parents and carers work with us by considering environmental impact when preparing packed lunches, and by labelling reusable items clearly.

Monitoring and Review

- This policy is reviewed annually or when there are significant changes to national guidelines.
- Feedback from staff and families is welcomed to inform improvements.